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Breaking: Many Toyota and Lexus owners must remove driver's side floor mat to avoid stuck accelerator

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A safety alert was just issued by the Feds, warning owners of many late-model Toyota and Lexus models to immediately remove the floor mats on the driver's side of the cars to avoid getting the accelerator stuck.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration "strongly recommends taking out removable floor mats on the driver's side in certain models and not to replace them with any other mat, either from Toyota or any other brand." Toyota is about to hold a press conference. From NHTSA:

"This is an urgent matter," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "For everyone's sake, we strongly urge owners of these vehicles to remove mats or other obstacles that could lead to unintended acceleration."

NHTSA notes that there continue to be reports of accelerator pedal clearance issues which provide the potential for an accelerator pedal to get stuck in the full open position. A stuck accelerator may result in very high vehicle speeds and a crash, which could cause serious injury or death.

NHTSA said that Toyota has announced that it will soon launch a safety recall of various model year vehicles to redress the problem. However, the safety agency warned owners to remove all driver-side floor mats from the models listed below immediately as an interim safety measure in advance of the recall.

Toyota and Lexus vehicles affected by this consumer alert are:

2007-2010 Camry

2005-2010 Avalon

2004-2009 Prius

2005-2010 Tacoma

2007-2010 Tundra

2007-2010 ES 350

2006-2010 IS 250 and IS 350

In September 2007, Toyota recalled an accessory all-weather floor mat sold for use in some 2007 and 2008 model year Lexus ES 350 and Toyota Camry vehicles because of similar problems.

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